

Service for National Governor's Conference recognized

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# Governor thanks Va. Guard and VSP

Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell thanked members of the Virginia State Police and Virginia National Guard for their work during security operations at the National Governor's Association Conference during a reception held Nov. 19, 2012, at the Executive Mansion in Richmond. The NGA Conference brought more than 40 governors to Williamsburg in July 2012, and McDonnell praised the VSP and Virginia Guard for their effective partnership and playing a key role in how smoothly the event was conducted. In addition, McDonnell recognized the two public safety organizations for their work during several severe weather events that impacted the commonwealth over the last three years.

"The coordination between the Virginia State Police and the Virginia National Guard has been spectacular," McDonnell said. "The agencies are working together to do the right thing to discharge the missions they receive from the Virginia Emergency Operations Center to protect Virginians."



Governor Bob McDonnell thanks members of the Virginia National Guard and Virginia State Police during a reception held Nov. 19, 2012, at the Executive Mansion in Richmond.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/11/21/2550/>

## Virginia National Guard News Headlines

### New state command chief promoted to CW5

Chief Warrant Officer 4 William Lyles was promoted to chief warrant officer 5 in a promotion ceremony held Nov. 21, 2012, at Fort Pickett. Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, hosted the event and "pinned on" the new rank for the state's senior warrant officer.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/11/29/2589/>

### Va. Guard's 29th Division Band to play for Capitol Tree Lighting

The Virginia National Guard's Clifton Forge-based 29th Division Band will provide holiday music for the 2012 Capitol Tree Lighting Friday, Dec. 7, 2012, at 5 p.m. at the South Portico of the Virginia State Capitol.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/11/27/2555/>

### Virginia Guard marksman selected for All-Guard Marksmanship Team

Spc. Steven Fletcher, of the Fort Belvoir-based 29th Infantry Division, honed his marksmanship skills early. "I have grown up hunting and shooting, and have always enjoyed it," Fletcher said. Now, Fletcher holds a coveted spot on the All-Guard Marksmanship Team, shooting on both the combat and pistol teams.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/11/16/2534/>

### Data Processing Unit welcomes incoming commander

Lt. Col. Matthew Wear assumed command of the Virginia National Guard's Fairfax-based Data Processing Unit from Lt. Col. Randall Cudworth in a change of command ceremony held Nov. 18 at Fort Belvoir.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/11/05/2450/>

## Mark Your Calendars!

### Dec. 12: Employment Training

The Virginia Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve and the Virginia Employment Commission are partnering to provide employment assistance training to veterans and service members from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Courtyard by Marriott at 6710 Commerce Street in Springfield, Va.

This full day workshop is at NO COST to service members, veterans and dependents, but space is limited. Register at this email: [registerforvirginiaesgrevents@gmail.com](mailto:registerforvirginiaesgrevents@gmail.com).

Please email that you are registering for the workshop in Springfield, and include your name, email address, best contact phone number, and former or current military affiliation (rank, unit, and branch).

# Communications teams keep units talking

Making sure Virginia National Guard troops can communicate during state active duty starts with a small group of military communications professionals who make sure all the necessary equipment is properly maintained and configured. Members of the Virginia Defense Force then use that equipment to keep information flowing between units on the ground and the Virginia Guard's Joint Operations Center.

"It all starts with a small group of dedicated Soldiers and Airmen working behind the scenes to make sure that commanders in the field can communicate," said Lt. Col. Dave Bennett, director of communications on the Virginia National Guard joint staff.

At the heart of the communications package provided for state active duty units is the Tactical Communications Package. The TacPak provides wireless internet access, cellular phone, satellite voice and data and video conferencing capabilities, and the final communications package adds cellular phones and handsets for the Virginia Statewide Agencies Radio System, Bennett explained.

When the Guard is notified it will bring personnel on state active duty, Soldiers and Airmen working in the J6 communications section begin to assemble and test the equipment, making sure each set is specially tailored for the mission it will be supporting.

"Master Sgt. Mike Pittman does a tremendous job making sure the TacPaks are properly configured and operating properly," Bennett said.

From there, VDF members operating as Incident Management Assistance Teams pick up the equipment and link up with the units in the field. They work directly with the mission commanders to keep important information flowing such as personnel status, logistics requirements and mission accomplishments.

During Hurricane Sandy in late October, more than 60 members of the VDF came from all around the commonwealth to deploy 13 IMATs at key locations along with Virginia Army National Guard units. In addition, VDF members augmented operations center personnel.

VDF members working in the IMATs receive special training



**Master Sgt. Mike Pittman and Staff Sgt. James Lumford conduct final operations checks on a Tactical Communications Package at Mullins Armory in Sandston.**

on the TacPaks as well as in WebEOC, the web-based information management program used to track missions between units in the field, the Guard's JOC and the Virginia Emergency Operations Center.

The VDF teams received universal praise for their teamwork and the contribution they made to the overall success of the Guard's recovery operation, said Col. Jim Ring, Virginia National Guard director of joint operations.

"The VDF continues to prove themselves as an important element of the Virginia Guard's response capability and helps make sure essential information is flowing between troops in the field and the JOC," Ring said.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/11/27/2567/>

## MORE ON THE WEB

### Video: Governor and AG Holiday Video Message

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10151314775236131>

### Video: AG and SEL Holiday Video Message

<http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10100864180302796>

### GSA hosts public meeting for proposed training center at Fort Pickett and Pickett Park

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/11/15/2559/>

### Change of command ceremony planned for Winchester-based Virginia Guard infantry battalion

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/11/29/2594/>

### Virginia National Guard on Twitter

<http://www.twitter.com/VaNationalGuard>

### Virginia National Guard on Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/VaGuardPAO>

<http://www.facebook.com/VaNationalGuard>

### Virginia Guard Public Affairs Flickr Photostream

<http://flickr.com/photos/VaGuardPAO>



**A member of the Virginia Defense Force puts a TacPak into operation Oct. 27, 2012, in support of Hurricane Sandy in Fredericksburg**